Appl. No. 09/533,396
Amdt. dated August 31, 2004
Reply to Office Action of March 29, 2004

<div align="center">Remarks</div>

The present amendment responds to the Official Action dated June 7, 2004. The Official

Action rejected claims 1-15 under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) based on Nordman U.S. Patent No.

6,061,346 ("Nordman") in view of Bell U.S. Patent No. 6,707914 ("Bell"). This ground of

rejection is addressed below following a brief discussion of the present invention to provide

context. Claims 1, 7 and 10 have been amended to be more clear and distinct. Claims 1-15 are

presently pending.

The Present Invention

Among its several aspects, a network according to the present invention includes a

wireless network providing connectivity to client stations with improved security. Depending on

design, the wireless network comprises one or more wireless access points connected to a central

hub. The wireless network provides communication between the wireless access point or points

and the client stations, but does not perform any authentication to control connection to the

wireless access points. Any wireless client may obtain access to the wireless network through a

wireless network access point.

A wireless network access point provides a connection to a Security Base (SB) server

which controls access to the wired network by clients on the wireless network. The SB server

has an interface with the wireless network, as well as an interface with the wired network. The

SB server is typically connected to a network hub on the wired network and acts as a gateway to

wired network resources for clients on the wireless network. When a wireless network client

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establishes a connection to the SB server, the SB server performs authentication for the wireless

network client. Authentication is performed in order to verify that the wireless network client is

authorized to gain access to the wired network. No authentication to the wireless network is

required, and so the fact that a client has access to the wireless network does not imply that the

client has any authorization for access to the wired network. Instead, control over the wired

network is maintained by requiring each wireless network client to be authenticated as authorized

to gain access to the wired network.

Once the wireless network client has been authenticated, the SB server provides the

wireless network client with a temporary Internet protocol (IP) address on the wired network,

using dynamic host control processing (DHCP). The SB server also provides the wireless

network client with a unique session key to be used for encrypted communication with the wired

network. The session key is used by one client during one connection session to the wired

network.

The Art Rejections

All of the art rejections hinge on the application of Nordman and Bell, taken in

combination. As addressed in greater detail below, the cited references do not support the

Official Action's reading of them and the rejections based thereupon should be reconsidered and

withdrawn. Further, the Applicant does not acquiesce in the analysis of the cited references

made by the Official Action and respectfully traverses the Official Action's analysis underlying

its rejections.

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The Official Action rejected claims 1-15 under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as unpatentable over

Nordman in view of Bell. In light of the present amendments to claims 1, 7 and 10, this ground

of rejection is respectfully traversed. In the discussion which follows below, the claims are

discussed in the order as they were addressed by the Official Action.

Claim 10, as amended, claims establishing a connection between a wireless network

access point and a security base (SB) server connected to a wired network. Claim 10 further

claims establishing a connection between the SB server and a wireless network client

communicating with the SB server through the wireless network access point, exchanging

encryption keys between the SB server and the wireless network client and transmitting

authentication information from the wireless network client to the SB server through the wireless

network access point. Claim 10 further claims performing authentication for the wireless

network client by examining the authentication information to determine if the wireless network

client is authorized to gain access to the wired network. If authentication fails, connection to the

wired network is rejected. If authentication passes, connection to the wired network is accepted

and a temporary wired network address and a unique session encryption key are provided to the

wireless network client. Access is provided to wired network resources in response to requests

by the wireless network client.

These limitations in the claimed combination are not taught by Nordman. Nordman

teaches authentication of a wireless host in order to gain access to the wireless network. The

wireless network establishes a connection to the IP network and provides a wireless host

identifier, identifying the wireless host to the IP network. The wireless host is authorized to gain

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access to the IP network because the wireless host identifier is recognized as valid by the IP

network, and because the wireless host has been authenticated by the wireless network for

identification and access to the wireless network. Claim 10, by contrast, claims a wireless

network client that is authenticated for access to a wired network without any need for access to

the wireless network through which it gains a connection to the wired network. The wireless

network is open to any user, but access to the wired network is controlled by the security base

server, which receives and examines authentication information before allowing access to the

wired network. Claim 10, as amended, therefore defines over Nordman.

Adding Bell to Nordman does not cure Nordman's deficiencies as a reference with respect

to claim 10. Bell teaches providing a session key to an end station, but does not teach using a

security base server connected to a wired network to authenticate a wireless network client as

authorized to gain access to the wired network, as claimed by claim 10. Claim 10, as amended,

therefore defines over the cited art and should be allowed.

Claim 1, as amended, claims a server connected to a wireless network access point and

having access to a wired network. The server is operative to perform authentication for a

wireless client establishing a connection to the server through the wireless network access point.

The server performs authentication by examining authentication information transmitted from the

client to the server and determining whether or not the authentication information identifies the

wireless network client as authorized to gain access to the wired network. The server is operative

to establish a connection session upon authentication of a client, and is also operative to provide

the client with a wired network address valid for the connection session upon authentication of

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the client, to encrypt communications with the wireless network access point and to provide a cryptographic key valid for the connection session to the client upon authentication of the client.

As noted above with respect to claim 10, neither Nordman, Bell, nor a combination thereof teaches or makes obvious a server operative to examine authentication information transmitted from the wireless network client to the server through a wireless network access point in order to determine if the wireless network client is authorized to gain access to the wired network. Claim 1, as amended, therefore defines over the cited art and should be allowed.

Claim 7, as amended, claims a wireless network access point operative to establish a connection with a server operating as a portal between the wireless network and a wired network. The wireless network access point is operative to conduct communications with the server in order to authenticate wireless network clients as authorized to access the wired network. The wireless network access point is further operative to receive authentication information from one or more wireless network clients and transfer the authentication information to the server in order to allow the server to examine the authentication information for a wireless network client and determine if the information indicates that the wireless network client is authorized to access the wired network. The wireless network access point is further operative to receive a cryptoprocessing key from the server upon authentication of a client and to transfer the key to that client.

As noted above with respect to claim 10, neither Nordman, Bell, nor a combination thereof teaches or makes obvious a wireless access point receiving authentication information from a wireless network client and transferring the information to a server connected to a wired
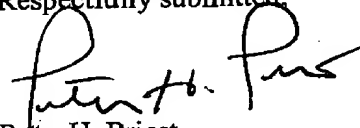
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network in order to allow the server to examine the authentication information for the wireless

network client and determine if the information indicates that the wireless network client is

authorized to access the wired network. Claim 7, as amended, therefore defines over the cited art

and should be allowed.

Conclusion

All of the presently pending claims, as amended, appearing to define over the applied

references, withdrawal of the present rejection and prompt allowance are requested.

Respectfully submitted,

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